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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 30 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the co-chairs (Japan, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and the European Union), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Co-chairs' Summary of Conclusions of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan that took place in Tokyo on 21 and 22 January 2002 (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 20 (f) and 43, and of the Security Council.

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Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, 21-22 January 2002: co-chairs' summary of conclusions*

1. The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan was held at the ministerial level in Tokyo on 21 and 22 January with the participation of the Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration, Hamid Karzai, and other representatives of the Administration. Japan, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and the European Union were the co-chairs of the Conference.

2. The Conference provided the Afghan Interim Authority an opportunity to reaffirm its determination to pursue the process of reconciliation, reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, according to the Bonn Agreement, and provided the international donor community an opportunity to express its political support for this process with indications of concrete assistance.

3. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, addressed the Conference at the outset. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, also spoke before the Conference at the opening session.

4. Ministers and representatives from 61 countries and 21 international organizations attended. The discussions were based on input from the Afghan Interim Authority and built on the results of the senior officials' meeting, held in Washington on 20 November 2001, and the first Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group meeting, held in Brussels on 20 and 21 December 2001. Afghan and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) held a separate meeting. Experts also met to discuss military demobilization, military and police training, demining and counter-narcotics issues and alternative development.

5. The Conference demonstrated the strong commitment of the international community to reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan by making specific commitments and pledges.

6. The Conference stressed the importance of implementation of the Bonn process, including the time frame set in the Bonn Agreement. Assistance will be conditional on all Afghan parties positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn with the aim of establishing peace, representative governance and stability in Afghanistan, and eliminating terrorism and narcotics production and trafficking. It was noted that, as the efforts for reconstruction proceed, due geographical balance within Afghanistan should be taken into account in resource allocation.

7. Chairman Karzai and other representatives of the Afghan Interim Authority made presentations on their vision and policies for Afghan reconstruction and development. They expressed their resolve to pursue the process of reconciliation and reconstruction of Afghanistan on the basis of the Bonn Agreement and to work

* This document was prepared on the responsibility of the co-chairs from Japan, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and the European Union.

towards these objectives in close coordination with the international donor community.

8. The Afghan Interim Authority identified the following several key priority areas for the reconstruction of their country:

(a) Enhancement of administrative capacity, with emphasis on the payment of salaries and the establishment of the government administration;

(b) Education, especially for girls;

(c) Health and sanitation;

(d) Infrastructure, in particular, roads, electricity and telecommunications;

(e) Reconstruction of the economic system, in particular, the currency system;

(f) Agriculture and rural development, including food security, water management and revitalizing the irrigation system.

Along with these priority areas, the Afghan Interim Authority stressed its commitment to transparency, efficiency and accountability. It strongly underscored the importance of reviving its tradition of private entrepreneurship as an engine of growth. The Afghan Interim Authority also emphasized the importance of community-building, which underlies all sectors in Afghanistan. The importance of demining and assistance to war victims and the disabled was also stressed. Without secure and active communities where refugees and internally displaced persons wish to return, any reconstruction effort will not reach its goal.

The Afghan Interim Authority recognized that it holds primary responsibility for reconstruction. The international community concurred and expressed its determination to provide support and closely coordinate with the Afghan Interim Authority and the people of Afghanistan as they conduct reconstruction efforts.

9. There was recognition that the United Nations should continue to play a pivotal role. The Conference recognized and greatly appreciated the catalysing role that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi, has played and will continue to play in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. As for reconstruction, which is inseparably linked to the political process, the Conference stressed the need to support activities under the auspices of the Special Representative. It also welcomed the fact that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been appointed to lead the early recovery efforts on behalf of the United Nations system.

10. Strong emphasis was put on the importance of rapidly establishing a sound and comprehensive macroeconomic and monetary framework. Sustainable economic development and the effective use of donor funding urgently require that sound currency arrangements, as well as strong and transparent budgetary and treasury systems, are put in place. Donors pledged to provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to help the Afghan Interim Authority to create the essential institutional framework.

11. The Conference recognized the vital importance of security and counter-narcotics issues to the success of reconstruction and placed special emphasis on

providing systematic follow-up and sufficient assistance to ensure steady and irreversible progress.

12. The Conference emphasized the centrality of restoring the rights and addressing the needs of women, who have been the prime victims of conflict and oppression. Women's rights and gender issues should be fully reflected in the reconstruction process.

13. The Conference also stressed the key roles being played by Afghan and international NGOs. In the NGO meeting held on 20 January, Afghan and international NGOs participated and the results of the meeting were reported to the plenary session. The NGO representative reported that Afghan and international NGOs agreed that a focus on education and training is necessary, particularly for women, to build the capacity of the Afghan people to contribute to reconstruction. Continued dialogue and coordination between NGOs, international organizations, donors and the Afghan Interim Authority are essential to ensure efficient use of resources.

14. The Conference welcomed the preliminary needs assessment prepared by the World Bank, UNDP and the Asian Development Bank. Further work on a more comprehensive needs assessment is planned to take place in Afghanistan in full partnership with the Afghan Interim Authority in the coming weeks. Participants will review and monitor evolving reconstruction needs and progress reports of various projects at future meetings of the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group.

15. In response to the vision and policies on reconstruction of the Afghan Interim Authority, participants in the Conference expressed their readiness to help the Afghan people in their reconstruction effort. To make concrete this commitment, pledges and contributions of over $1.8 billion for 2002 were announced. Some donors made multi-year pledges and commitments of various time frames. The cumulative amount was more than $4.5 billion. In addition, some countries offered support in kind without specifying a monetary value. Participants agreed on the urgency of rapid disbursement and the importance of addressing the immediate financial needs for the functioning of the Afghan Interim Authority over the next few months.

16. In view of the continuing necessity for humanitarian relief in and around Afghanistan, the Conference also reaffirmed the participants' firm intent to remain engaged in humanitarian assistance. Further, the Conference stressed the need for strong complementarity between humanitarian assistance, recovery, reconstruction and development.

17. Participants reaffirmed the usefulness of funding mechanisms, the Implementation Group and a common assistance databank to facilitate the implementation of international assistance as agreed at the first meeting of the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group in Brussels.

18. Existing mechanisms will be a primary vehicle for major donors in financing reconstruction. In addition, a single trust fund will be established; administration of the proposed fund will be entrusted to the World Bank. Decisions about allocation of expenditures will be the responsibility of the World Bank, UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The trust fund should be established in a manner allowing for

quick and responsive distribution of its funds, while meeting its fiduciary responsibilities. Participants request that such a fund be established expeditiously.

19. To achieve strategic coherence and coordination among the Afghan Interim Authority, donors and NGOs, the Implementation Group will meet in Kabul. The Afghan Interim Authority will chair the Implementation Group. The World Bank, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and the Afghan Support Group Chair will serve as vice-chairs of the Implementation Group. The Conference confirmed the roles of, and the need for close coordination between, the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group and the Implementation Group. The Implementation Group will be held at least quarterly in Kabul in order to conduct coordination among the Afghan Interim Authority and donors. The Afghan Interim Authority can call additional meetings of the Implementation Group, as necessary. The view was expressed of the importance of moving as quickly as possible towards a normal consultative group process for Afghanistan assistance. The Afghan Interim Authority Vice-Chairman and Finance Minister Hedayat Amin-Arsala chaired the first meeting of the Implementation Group on the margins of the Conference and indicated that the next meeting will be held in Kabul in March.

20. In order to facilitate information sharing, participating Governments and international organizations will contribute necessary information on assistance programmes to the common assistance databank to be established by the World Bank and UNDP.

21. The Conference noted the UNDP proposal for a code of conduct to avoid distortionary wage and rent inflation caused by the international presence and urged the Implementation Group to work further on the proposal.

22. The next meeting of the Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group will be held by the middle of the year to review developments and progress in the reconstruction process.